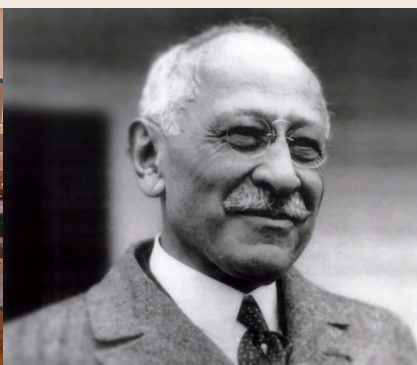


# The Campaign to Create the Julius Rosenwald & Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park



The Campaign is working to create a multi-site National Park celebrating the life and legacy of Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools, with a visitor center in Chicago and a small number of Rosenwald Schools in various states.

## Who was Julius Rosenwald?

The son of German-Jewish immigrants, Julius Rosenwald helped make Sears, Roebuck the retailing powerhouse of the early 20th century and used his new-found wealth to become a visionary philanthropist.

In 1910, after reading Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery*, Rosenwald offered to contribute \$25,000 toward building a YMCA for African Americans in any city that could raise \$75,000 independently. This investment led to the construction of African American YMCAs in 24 cities.

**Between 1913 and 1932, Julius Rosenwald helped fund the construction of 5,357 schools and related buildings across 15 southern states. African American men and women provided land, labor, materials, and funding.**

Shortly after joining the board of Tuskegee Institute, Rosenwald agreed to Booker T. Washington's suggestion that he help build six schools in rural Alabama where African American communities were already raising money to provide their children with the education that the state was not. The enthusiasm and enterprise of the communities and the "challenge" grants offered by Rosenwald helped encourage state school systems to begin more adequately meeting their responsibilities to provide education.

In 1917, Rosenwald created the *Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Between 1928 and 1948, nearly 900 individuals in the fields of education, history, medicine, and the arts received *Fund Fellowships* to advance their careers. Two-thirds of them were African American, including Marian Anderson, Ralph Bunche, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, and Jacob Lawrence.

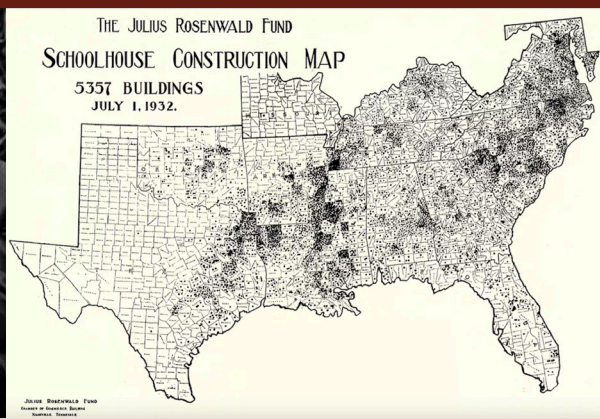
**Rosenwald invested in people. Those investments are still paying dividends.**

The Fund supported early NAACP legal cases; contributed to a number of HBCUs, including Tuskegee, Fisk, and Howard Universities and Morehouse College; and supported programs to expand and improve health care for African Americans. Rosenwald was also a founder of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago; a board member of Jane Addams' Hull House; and the founding donor of the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.

## What is the Historical Significance of Rosenwald Schools?

Rosenwald Schools resulted from a series of partnerships between Julius Rosenwald, nearly 5,000 African American communities, and local governments. A number of Rosenwald School graduates, such as Congressman John Lewis and poet Maya Angelou, made significant contributions to the Civil Rights Movement.

**Rosenwald Schools educated one-third of African American students in the Jim Crow South.**



Following the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that ruled racial segregation in schools unconstitutional, many Rosenwald school buildings fell into disrepair. About 500 are estimated still to exist.

## Why Create a National Historical Park?

The innovative and far-reaching philanthropy of Julius Rosenwald and the impact of the Rosenwald Schools on African American education are nationally significant, but little known, parts of 20th century American history. Yet today, they are barely remembered. The best way to tell this remarkable story is in a National Park.

**Rosenwald's funding of Rosenwald Schools and Fellowships and his pioneering partnerships with African American communities deserve to be celebrated in a National Park.**

The planned Park will be an important enhancement to the National Park System, filling four significant gaps. It will be the first National Park to:

- honor the life and legacy of a Jewish American;
- interpret the impact of Rosenwald Schools on African American education in the Jim Crow South;
- highlight African American and Jewish partnerships in the early 20th century; and
- provide insights into American philanthropy.

Importantly, the Park will pay tribute to the value of education as an equalizing force in our society.

## The Campaign's Progress

The Campaign has accomplished a great deal since its founding in late 2016. In 2017, State Historical Preservation Officers from 14 states recommended that 55 Rosenwald Schools and one teacher home be considered for inclusion in the Park. Campaign representatives visited 34 School facilities and gathered

important data for its in-depth 2021 report. The Campaign also issued a historic context study report in 2018 and a report in 2020 on sites in Chicago relevant to Rosenwald that might be candidates for a visitor center.

The *Julius Rosenwald and Rosenwald Schools Act of 2020*, which became law on January 13, 2021, directs the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a special resource study of the sites associated with Rosenwald and the Schools. The study commenced in April 2022 and is a key first step toward legislation to create the Park.

To date, **more than 200 nonprofit organizations** representing a diverse range of constituencies have expressed support to the Campaign for creating the National Park.

The Campaign is active on many fronts—interacting with the NPS; giving presentations to diverse groups; jointly sponsoring programs with Rosenwald Schools and other organizations; gaining additional nonprofit supporters; and collecting artifacts for the Park's visitor center. Our momentum is increasing, and we are focused on creating the Park as soon as possible.

## Help us tell this inspiring yet little-known story in a National Historical Park!

To make a tax-deductible donation, go to:  
[www.rosenwaldpark.org/donate/](http://www.rosenwaldpark.org/donate/)

Or send checks to:

Rosenwald Park Campaign  
19 Maplewood Park Court  
Bethesda, MD 20814

Visit our website at: [www.rosenwaldpark.org](http://www.rosenwaldpark.org)

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